

Conscious Sedation

Guideline: Conscious sedation may be used to increase a patient's ability to tolerate medical and dental procedures and should only be considered when less restrictive techniques have been ineffective.

DEFINITIONS:

Conscious sedation: Provides a minimally depressed level of consciousness with the patient maintaining protective reflexes, the ability to breathe independently, and the ability to respond to physical and/or verbal stimulation.

Primary care prescribers: Physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants who provide primary care services and are authorized to prescribe medications and treatments for people on their assigned caseloads.

RATIONALE:

Conscious sedation should be used to help ensure a successful outcome to a procedure. It should not be used for convenience of staff.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Sedation Assessment

Assessment will be completed prior to the use of medications for conscious sedation.

The dentist or other medical specialist may consult with the patient's primary care prescriber and/or review the annual physical, current medication orders, and pertinent medical information.

1. Non-compliant behaviors during dental/medical examinations or procedures should be documented in the dental/medical progress notes, when applicable.
2. Attempts to modify behaviors should be documented in the patient's record, as appropriate.
3. The efficacy of sedation should be documented in the dental/medical progress notes. Dosages may be determined from a careful consideration of the following:
 - a. body weight
 - b. degree of anxiety
 - c. level of sedation desired
 - d. concurrent medications
 - e. previous sedation history
 - f. practitioner experience

Familiarization Programs

Familiarization programs, when indicated, should be completed prior to or in conjunction with the use of conscious sedation.

1. The patient should be notified of necessary sedation and potential complications.
2. When ongoing efforts to acclimate the patient to the treatment environment are appropriate it should be documented in the patient's record.
3. Necessary treatment should not be delayed for behavior modification training if such a delay could result in increased morbidity.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Practitioners will maintain appropriate licensure and training to safely order and administer sedative drugs.
2. Adequate staff and equipment should be available to ensure patient safety during sedation procedures.
3. Practitioners will be appropriately trained and have equipment available to adequately respond to potential medical emergencies¹.
4. Sedated patients will be monitored appropriately during and following the procedure as ordered by the practitioner.
5. The ultimate determination on the use of sedation will be made by the practitioner in accordance with the current laws and regulations governing dental and medical practice in South Carolina¹.
6. Sedation consent and monitoring of vital signs should be consistent with the standard in the community. It should also be recognized that there may be certain situations (e.g., combative patient, emergency surgery) whereby the standards may be clinically impractical and that adherence to the standards is no guarantee of a successful outcome.
7. Post-treatment monitoring of vital signs should be individualized according to patient response, level of sedation achieved, and the facilities available.
8. Appropriate consent should be obtained as per facility policy.

REFERENCE

S.C. Code Ann. § 44-15-40 (2004 South Carolina Code of Regulations – Board of Dentistry Current through State Register Volume 28, Issue 9, effective September 24, 2004). Available at <http://www.scstatehouse.net/coderegs/c039.htm>